

The Washington Post _____
 The New York Times _____
 The Washington Times _____
 The Wall Street Journal _____
 The Christian Science Monitor _____
 New York Daily News _____
 USA Today P. 12 A _____
 The Chicago Tribune _____
 Date 14 Nov 88

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Don't restore aid; seek peace now

By Frances T. Farenthold
 Guest columnist

HOUSTON — Which George Bush will be making the new president's decisions on military aid to the contras?

Will it be the man who proudly proclaims that he moves in the U.S. mainstream, in harmony with the overwhelming majority of his fellow citizens, those who disapprove of our sustaining the contra war in Nicaragua? *HNU*

Or will it be the man who told *The Washington Times* Nov. 7 he would not hesitate to ask Congress for military aid and then, as president-elect, proclaimed in his first news conference that contra aid was a matter of "high priority"?

It is an open question how adamant he would be on the issue.

However, a defeat of military aid by Congress would not necessarily thwart the destabilization effort of the USA against Nicaragua. This destabilization can continue to proceed despite votes or headlines or commentary, as we have painfully learned.

Low visibility will be the key to the lessening of public concern. For Nicaragua, the trade embargo will stay in place, development loans will continue to be blocked and, with or without the contras, internal conflicts will be encouraged. All the dirty tricks in the CIA's covert hamper are available.

A point to note is that George Bush will be the first president who was a director of the



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CIA. In his news conference, he said that one concrete change he will make is to be briefed directly "every single day" — not indirectly through the national security adviser, the present and past practice.

If he does not take the predictable course of continuing the corrupt and obsessive Reagan policy on Nicaragua, he has the opportunity to secure firmly the safety of the USA and, in the same initiative, to put an end to one of the most sordid and unpopular chapters in the history of our foreign policy.

Second, if he respects Congress as he noted in his press conference, he at least will listen to the genuine supporters of the Arias plan. House Speaker Jim Wright pointed out in his statement of Sept. 23 that while our government has pursued a public policy of supporting peace talks in Central America, U.S. agents have engaged in devious efforts to destabilize Nicaragua and have, by creating incidents, produced overreactions which are disruptive of the peace talks.

Third, the new administration could and should enter into bilateral talks with the Sandinistas, which can produce binding arrangements on matters of genuine concern.